

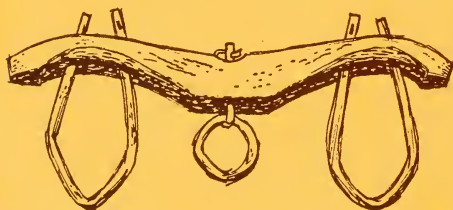
973.7L63

BAb82

1956

Abraham Lincoln The Great Emancipator
Presented by John Hancock Mutual Life
Insurance Company

LINCOLN ROOM
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY



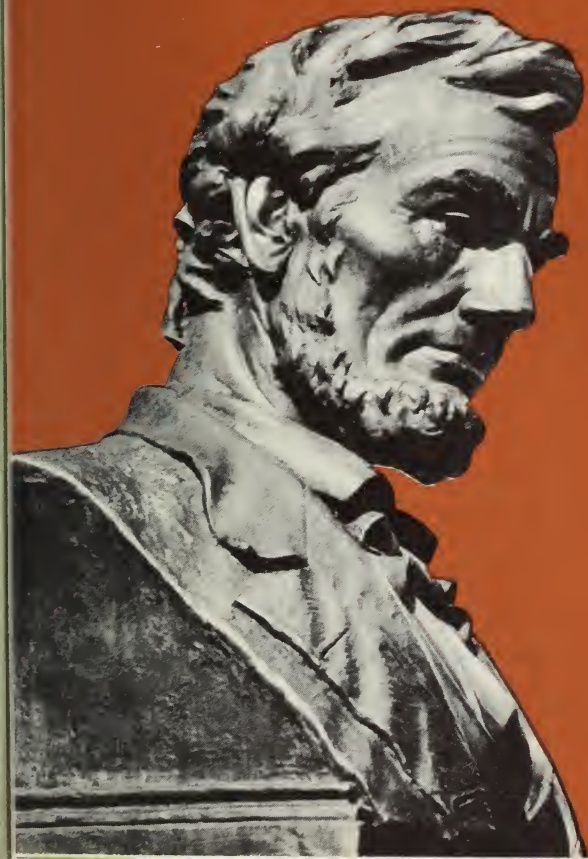
MEMORIAL
the Class of 1901

presented by

Harry E. and Marion D. Pratt
Collection

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

the great emancipator





PRESENTED BY

John Hancock
MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

973.7263
B4682
1956

Lincoln, Abraham

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Born in a log cabin, he ascended to the White House; attending school less than one year, he became a great orator and writer; beset with disappointments and defeats, he rose above them to become one of the most revered and beloved of statesmen in all history — so reads the remarkable career of Abraham Lincoln.

LINCOLN was born on February 12, 1809, on "Sinking Spring Farm," in the backwoods of Kentucky in what is now Larue County. A great stone memorial now encloses the rough log cabin, thus preserving the birthplace of one of our greatest Americans.

His father, Thomas Lincoln, could barely write his own name, and was neither energetic nor ambitious enough to provide more than the barest living for his family. His mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, was gentle and religious, and too frail for the hardships of rude pioneer life.

In 1816, after having lived in several places, the family moved to Indiana, working their way through nearly one hundred miles of forest. During the first winter, they lived in a half-faced camp, a crude shelter open on one side where a fire was built on the ground. A year later a log cabin was completed, but it had only the earth as a floor. The next year his mother died of the "milk-sick," and Tom Lincoln married again, traveling to Kentucky to fetch widowed Sarah (Bush) Johnston and her two children. She was a superior woman and the most important influence in Abraham's early life, caring tenderly for him and encouraging his ambitions. When a grown man, he said, "All that I am or hope ever to be I got from my mother, God bless her."

EDUCATION

Lincoln went to school "by littles," as he said, for about nine years, but all his schooling together did not amount to one full year. It taught him to read, write and "cipher to the rule of three," but the rest he did for himself. He had no pencils or paper, but wrote his lessons and did his sums on boards with a piece of charcoal. Later, when he did secure paper, he copied his compositions with a pen made from a wild turkey's quill and ink from blackberry root.

Although he had to work hard helping his father clear the forest, plough ground, plant corn, gather and shuck it, or doing odd jobs for neighboring farmers, he read every book he could lay his hands on. He often walked miles to borrow a book, and once told a friend that he had read through every book that he had heard of within a circuit of fifty miles.

Lincoln was endowed with a great deal of native wit, a ready tongue, and the ability to tell stories. Because of these gifts, he was always a popular figure at house-raising, husking bees, and at the Gentryville country store, where he entertained the country-folk with his speeches and funny stories. His natural gift for speech-making, coupled with a great love of justice,

made him consider law as a profession. But because he had no law books of his own and no money with which to buy any, he walked twelve miles to the office of an acquaintance to read a volume on the laws of Indiana.

At seventeen, Lincoln stood six feet four inches in his bare feet. His arms and legs were unusually long, and his hands and feet huge. He was very strong but clumsy, and far from handsome. He made friends by laughing at himself, but could reply to a question about how long a man's legs ought to be by saying "long enough to reach the ground."

DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI

In 1828, when he was nineteen, Lincoln got a job on a neighbor's flatboat and made an eighteen-hundred-mile journey down the Mississippi River to New Orleans to market vegetables and bacon among the cotton planters.

Two years later, the Lincoln family moved to Illinois in wagons drawn by heavy oxtteams, and built another log cabin. Abraham split wooden rails to fence in ten acres of land, and hence, years later when a candidate for the presidency of the United States, he was nicknamed the "rail-splitter." The same winter, he split fourteen hundred rails to pay a woman for a pair of trousers she made for him. The next spring he made a second trip to New Orleans on a flatboat, and saw negroes chained, put on a block and sold to the highest bidder. It is said that the sight made him sick at heart, and that he then and there vowed that if he ever had a chance "to hit that thing," he would "hit it hard." Little did he dream then that his name was to go down in history as the great liberator of these oppressed people.

WAR, POLITICS, AND BUSINESS

On his return, Lincoln settled in New Salem, Illinois, where he lived for several years and did odd jobs about town. He

clerked in Denton Offutt's store, finding time to study Kirkham's *Grammar*, "lying full length on the counter with his head on a parcel of calico," and to spin his famous yarns to the men and boys who gathered at the village store. Here he won the lasting nickname of "Honest Abe." He is said to have walked six miles to correct a mistake of six and a quarter cents. But within a year the store "petered out," and Lincoln, now twenty-two, was without a job.

At the time of the Black Hawk war, volunteers from New Salem unanimously chose Lincoln as their captain, but the war was over before they saw active service.

Ambitious to enter politics, in the spring of 1832 Lincoln announced that he would be a candidate in the autumn election for the State legislature. Although he secured nearly all the votes of his immediate neighborhood, he finished seventh in a field of twelve candidates.

With W. F. Berry as partner, Lincoln now bought three small stores in New Salem and combined them into one. The purchasing was done on credit, and early in 1833 the business "winked out," as Lincoln said, and left the firm owing \$1100. Berry drank himself to death soon after, and Lincoln assumed the entire debt. He might have freed himself by declaring bankruptcy, but he chose rather to pay every dollar of it, although it took about fifteen years of struggling and saving to do so.

Lincoln soon obtained the position of assistant county surveyor, and learned surveying and the necessary mathematics in six strenuous weeks of studying by himself. Meanwhile he was appointed local postmaster, and because the mails were small and infrequent, he "carried the office around in his hat."

IN THE ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATURE

"Can't the party raise no better material than that?" asked the local doctor as he looked at Lincoln who was about to make a speech in his second campaign for State legislator in 1834. After Lincoln's speech the doctor exclaimed that Abe

knew more than all the other candidates put together. This time Lincoln was elected on the Democratic ticket, and thereafter he was elected for three more terms.

Lincoln went to Vandalia, then the State capital, in a brand-new suit of "store clothes" bought with money loaned by a friend. Here he met Stephen A. Douglas, who for years was to be his rival in more than one affair. In 1836, at the age of twenty-seven, Lincoln was admitted to the bar, and the next year went to live in Springfield, the new State capital. On a borrowed horse, and with little money, he rode up to the store of an acquaintance, Joshua Speed, and asked if he could buy bedding and have credit until Christmas, when he hoped to be a success at law. "If I fail in that," he said, "I will probably never pay you at all." Speed offered to share his own large bed with him in his room over the store. Lincoln carried his saddle bags up to the room, dropped them on the floor, and came back beaming with delight. "Well, Speed, I'm moved!" he said.

In the Illinois legislature, Lincoln's power and wisdom as a statesman first began to develop. He lived close to the people, and believed in their judgment as the surest guide in public affairs. He worked hard to provide the State with railroads, canals, and banks.

During these eight years Lincoln was also practicing law, and he became widely known and admired as he rode about the country with the district judge from one court house to another. He had successive partners who became his devoted friends, including William Herndon, whose recollections supply much of what we know about Lincoln's early life. Lincoln had a reputation for defending only the cases which he believed to be right and just. He had the habit of telling stories that not only spread good humor in the courtroom but made his case clear. He soon became one of the best lawyers in Illinois.

When a young man, Lincoln had won the love of Ann Rutledge. At her death, his grief was so great his friends feared that he would lose his mind. Years later, in 1842, Lincoln and Douglas were rivals for the heart and hand of Mary Todd, a

handsome young woman from Kentucky. Lincoln was the victor, and they were married on November 4, 1842. Four boys were born to them, one of whom, Robert T. Lincoln, later became United States Ambassador to Great Britain. The other three died young.

LINCOLN AND SLAVERY

In 1847, Lincoln defeated the famous circuit-riding missionary, the Reverend Peter Cartwright, and won a seat in Congress as the only Whig from Illinois. He made speeches criticizing "Polk's War" against Mexico, and tried to keep slavery out of the new territories from Texas to Oregon. He later declared that he had voted for the Wilmot Proviso and similar resolutions to exclude slavery "at least forty times," but they did not pass. He proposed a plan for gradual, compensated freeing of slaves in the District of Columbia if the citizens approved, but it failed in Congress.

In 1849 he made several effective speeches for Whig candidates in Massachusetts, but did not run for office himself, returning to his law practice. He was greatly in need of money. Besides supporting his own family, he sent money to his father, his stepmother, and a stepbrother, and after his father's death, he paid off a mortgage on the old home. He "rode the circuit," a "gray shawl about his shoulders, carrying a carpet bag, fat with papers and clothing, and a faded green cotton umbrella without a handle, tied with a piece of twine."

In 1854 the Kansas-Nebraska Act became a law. It was introduced into the Senate by Douglas, and permitted the two new territories of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for themselves, when admitted to the Union, whether they would be free or slave states. Everyone realized that this new law opened to slavery the great territory of the northwest. Lincoln attacked the Kansas-Nebraska Act strongly, but lost in his 1855 contest for the Illinois senatorship.

The Republican Party was born at this time with Abraham

Lincoln, one of the founders, making a great "lost speech" at Bloomington, Illinois, which attracted many Whigs and moderates to the new party. At the first Republican National Convention held in Philadelphia in 1856, Lincoln was conspicuously mentioned as candidate for Vice President, but was not nominated.

Senator Stephen A. Douglas came back to Illinois and boldly defended his Kansas-Nebraska Act; whereupon Lincoln answered in a three-hour speech which made him the champion in the great cause of human liberty.

In 1858 the Democrats of Illinois nominated Douglas as Senator, while the Republicans declared: "Abraham Lincoln is the first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate." Cheering throngs packed the floor and galleries of the State House at Springfield to hear Lincoln's speech of acceptance. His words have come down to us, ringing with truth and justice: "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure permanently half *slave* and half *free*."

Lincoln now challenged Douglas to meet him in a series of debates, seven of which were held. People came from all over the country to the towns in Illinois where the debates took place. Douglas' arguments were fluent and brilliant; Lincoln's were straightforward and simple, reaching the very hearts of the people. Indeed, as Lincoln lost himself in his subject, his voice rang with a deep, strange beauty, his sad eyes kindled, and his tall, gaunt figure acquired a certain majesty.

Douglas argued that people had the right to choose for themselves whether or not they would have slaves. Lincoln pointed to the fighting in "bleeding Kansas" as a fruit of Douglas' logic, and argued for the right of the people through Congress to limit the moral evil of slavery to the states where it already existed. Although Douglas won the election as Senator, Lincoln was soon to have a greater honor — that of becoming President of the United States.

After the debates with Douglas, Lincoln's reputation spread

throughout the country and he was invited to address audiences in various parts of the North. The *New York Tribune* said of his speech at Cooper Institute in New York, February, 1860: "No man ever made such an impression in his first appeal to a New York audience." This famous speech was printed and quoted everywhere, and it aided in securing his election as President.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

As the presidential election of 1860 drew near, intense bitterness spread between the North and the South. The Democrats divided into Northern and Southern wings which nominated Douglas and Breckinridge for the presidency, making it impossible for either to win although together they got more votes than Lincoln. Getting only forty per cent of the total popular vote, Lincoln was elected the sixteenth President on November 6, 1860. By the next March, seven Southern states had left the Union, forming the Confederate States of America and electing Jefferson Davis as their President.

In Lincoln's inaugural address, delivered March 4, 1861, he said: "The Union of these States is perpetual. No State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union." Later he said: "The country has placed me at the helm of the ship; I'll try to steer her through." Many were those who shook their heads and asked: "Will that awkward old backwoodsman really get that ship through?"

Lincoln had a power to inspire and hold his followers steady to their purpose through years of suffering and failure. Considerate, gentle, tender, yet firm as a rock when he made up his mind, he finally proved himself worthy of being the most popular and beloved statesman in America. He loved the common people, and they trusted him. Often his Cabinet suggested that he write his state papers in a more elegant style, but he continued to write them in his own direct language saying, "The people will understand."

BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR

Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina joined the Southern federation. On April 12, 1861, the Confederacy began the Civil War by firing upon the Union Flag flying over Fort Sumter, South Carolina.

Lincoln, who from the very first declared the war to be for the Union and not against slavery, issued a call for 75,000 volunteers and made George B. McClellan chief commander of the Northern army. In July the battle of Bull Run, the first real fight of the war, was a victory for the South. The North was stunned by this blow, and for months and months General McClellan organized and drilled an excellent army, but made no move against the South. It remained for General U.S. Grant to win the first Northern victories. Early in the winter of 1862 he captured Ft. Henry and Ft. Donelson. Lincoln had to make many costly experiments with strategy and with generals before he could finally make Grant commander of the Union forces in 1864.

But the North was to meet defeat after defeat, and Lincoln, whose small son Willie died in February, 1862, grew more and more tender toward the suffering. He often visited the camps, hospitals, and prisons, talking with officers and men, and won their confidence and love. It is said that throughout the war a Bible lay on his desk, that he read it often, and many times spent all night in prayer.

FREEDOM FOR SLAVES

Although Lincoln put the preservation of the Union as the first great purpose of the war, by 1862 he knew that abolition of slavery should be made the second great purpose. Thousands of slaves were escaping to the North, and in July, 1862, the Congress passed a law permitting these escaped slaves to enter the Northern army, and allowing them and their families freedom. Lincoln first tried to have the slaves freed gradually

and to have the Government pay their owners for their loss, but the Congress would not agree to this plan. Then Lincoln framed the mighty sentences of the Emancipation Proclamation. But Secretary of State Seward persuaded him that the time was not yet ripe for announcing this proclamation. The Northern army was defeated at Cedar Mountain and in the second battle of Bull Run, and was now facing Lee, who had crossed the Potomac into Maryland. Lincoln told his Cabinet that he had made a promise to himself and his Maker, that if God gave the victory in the approaching battle, he would consider that God had decided his questions in favor of the slaves. On September 17 the Northerners were victorious at Antietam. Five days later, Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation which declared that all slaves held in areas under Confederate military control on January 1, 1863, would be considered by the U. S. Government "thenceforth and forever free."

On New Year's Day, when Lincoln signed the final draft of the Proclamation, he said: "If my name ever gets into history, it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it."

But the war was not yet over. The North suffered terrible defeats at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but victory awaited them at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Lincoln kept a large map of the United States on his wall and carefully followed the movements of the armies. Day and night he studied the campaign, poring over military books on strategy, planning movements with his generals, and often directing his leaders. But his heart ached for the men on the battlefields and for their anxious families at home. His face became thin and drawn, his eyes heavy and sunken. He remarked, "I feel as though I shall never be glad again." Once when a Union general urged him to execute twenty soldiers as deserters he answered: "There are already too many weeping widows in the United States. For God's sake don't ask me to add to the number, for I won't do it."

The autumn of 1863 brought the Northern victory at Chat-

tanooga. The next spring saw Grant beginning his attack on Richmond, with losses equal to the number of men in Lee's entire army in the "Wilderness," at Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor, but he grimly resolved "to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." Lincoln called upon the North for more men. By this time the people had learned to love and trust Lincoln, and they rallied around him, singing: "We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more." Again they elected him President.

During the year 1865, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was completed and made universal when the Thirteenth Amendment was added to the Constitution, forever forbidding slavery in every part of the United States.

In his second inaugural address, delivered March 4, 1865, Lincoln said: "Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. . . . With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

But it was not until after Sherman had marched through Georgia, and the Northern army had entered Richmond, that Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865, and the war was over. When the news of Lee's surrender reached the White House, Lincoln met with his Cabinet, and at his word, silently and in tears, they knelt and gave humble thanks to God.

The wildest delight swept the land. The long and terrible war was over; the Union was saved; the slaves would be free. Abraham Lincoln was hailed as the great friend of the people, the liberator of an oppressed race. In Richmond, the recent capital of the Southern Confederacy, he passed a group of negroes digging at a river landing. One of them, an old man, saw Lincoln and leaped forward, crying: "Bress de Lord, dere

is the great Messiah! He's cum at las' to free his chillum from dere bondage! Glory Hallelujah!" The old negro fell on his knees and kissed Lincoln's feet. Surrounded by kneeling negroes, Lincoln spoke: "Don't kneel to me. Kneel to God only, and thank Him for liberty."

Lincoln had no hatred for the South. He honored the valor of the Southern soldiers and generals. He called Stonewall Jackson a "brave, honest soldier," and once, when looking at Lee's picture, he said: "It is the face of a brave and noble man."

"NOW HE BELONGS TO THE AGES"

Great of heart and mind, the kindly Lincoln has won the hearts of the people as have few men in all the world's history. He once remarked that "God must love the common people, he made so many of them." Among his last official acts was one of mercy: he signed a pardon for a soldier who had been sentenced to be shot for desertion, and as he did so, Lincoln remarked: "I think the boy can do us more good above ground than under ground."

The evening of the very day when he signed this pardon, April 14, 1865, he went to Ford's Theatre with Mrs. Lincoln to see the play, "Our American Cousin." His box was draped with flags; the happy excitement of war ended, victory won and peace promised, was everywhere. At twenty minutes after ten, when all eyes were on the stage, a pistol shot rang out. Lincoln fell forward in his chair. His assassin, John Wilkes Booth, leaped to the stage, catching his spur in a flag and breaking his leg, but succeeded in getting to the stage door and riding away on a horse. Mrs. Lincoln cried out: "He has murdered the President." Lincoln was carried to a house across the street, where he lay silently through the night while all Washington watched, praying for his life. But the next morning, without regaining consciousness, he died. Stanton, the Secretary of War, whispered to those about the bedside: "Now he belongs to the ages."



ABRAHAM LINCOLN
the great emancipator

John Hancock
MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

973 7L63BAB821956

C001

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR



3 0112 031783068